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# A Breath of Life: Feminism in the American Jewish Community

*Sylvia Barack Fishman*

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# A Breath of Life: Feminism in the American Jewish Community

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**A Breath of Life: Feminism in the American Jewish Community** Sylvia Barack Fishman
Drawing on interviews with Jewish women from age 18 to 80, across the United States, as well on new demographic data, scholarship, literature and media, "A Breath of Life" explores contemporary options for Jewish women striving to combine community, family and individual needs. Fishman demonstrates the ways feminism has transformed both their secular and spiritual lives. Ceremonies such as Ba Mitzvah, which accept women into the Jewish fold, are now widely practiced. Girls receive as much Jewish education as boys. The vast majority of adult women pursue both vocational and avocational interests, marry and have children and choose their own religious options. This text charts the course these women take, and explores the challenges and pleasures they find along the way. Tracing the emergence and development of a distinctly Jewish form of feminism, which has grown alongside the larger feminist movement, but which specifically addresses the concerns of Jewish women, Fishman shows how it has done more to revitalize American Judaism than any other factor in the past two decades. Just as Eastern European Jews at the turn of the century and Holocaust survivors after World War II brought a religious intensity to American Jewish communities, today feminism is providing a fresh wave of enthusiastic reinterpretation and participation in American Jewish life.

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